



Archived at the Flinders Academic Commons:
<http://hdl.handle.net/2328/27231>

This is a scan of a document number DUN/Speeches/3308
in the Dunstan Collection, Special Collections, Flinders University Library.
<http://www.flinders.edu.au/library/info/collections/special/dunstan/>

Title:

ALP Broadcast from Station 5KA presented by Don Dunstan, Member for Norwood

Please acknowledge the source as:
Dunstan Collection, Flinders University Library.
Identifier: DUN/Speeches/3308

© Copyright Estate Donald Allan Dunstan

A.L.P. BROADCAST FROM STATION 5KA 5/6/61PRESENTED BY DON DUNSTAN - MEMBER FORNORWOOD

Good Evening,

It would appear from the correspondence columns of "The Advertiser" that the L.C.L. through people writing under non-deplumes is attempting to develop a most extraordinary argument concerning democracy and decentralisation in this State. Since this involves very strange cerebral process which could hardly be called reasoning, it would be instructive to examine it.

The argument runs this way. "The Labor Party says it believes in decentralisation. But it also says it believes in one vote one value. To get one vote value, each electoral district would have to contain as nearly as possible the same number of voters as every other district. As 63% of S.A.'s population lives in the metropolitan area of Adelaide, this would mean 63% of members of Parliament would be elected by the people of Adelaide and only 37% by the rest of the people of the State. This would give control of parliament to Adelaide, and that is the antithesis, they say, of decentralisation. They say the city would rule the country and that would be unfair."

Say the Liberals

This arbitrary division of the State into city and country is quite fallacious. Not all people who live in the city have identical interest or vote the same way. The same is true of country areas. The city people need development of the country areas - they need country production and country markets. In the same way country people could not do without the city's industrial production and markets. They are interdependent.

Let's have a look at the two words "democracy" and "decentralisation".

"Democracy", a word coming from a Greek root, means literally "people's rule". That means that the basis of election shall be that people, human beings, shall decide on the Government. The Labor Party is a Party which believes in democracy. We say, as does

every democratic body, that it doesn't matter where people live or what they own, or what they work at which gives them the right to vote, it is merely that they are people. Every sensible citizen would be in accord with that view. The Labor Party's electoral policy then is that there should be a House of Assembly of 56 members representing single electorates. The electoral boundaries should be drawn by an independent electoral commission, with electoral districts made as nearly equal in number of voters as possible. These seats should be re-aligned periodically to allow for shifts of population.

Now that is a policy which is in accordance with democracy.

What of the other word "decentralisation". Well, we might ask - decentralisation of what? Labor is quite clear on that point. Decentralisation of population, industry and facilities. That is Labor Policy. If there is a decentralisation of these things, in due course there will be more members representing country districts in the House of Assembly under the principle of one vote one value than would be representing the metropolitan area.

But if we don't have Labor's democratic electoral policy we won't get decentralisation of people industry and facilities. Since one vote one value was cut out of the South Australian constitution, the weighted rural vote has produced centralisation of people, industry and facilities not decentralisation. Before one vote one value was abolished, the country areas contained just on 60% of South Australia's population - now they contain only 37%. The point is that our L.C.L. governments dare not decentralise people, industry and facilities. That policy would increase the number of industrial workers, traditionally Labor voters in the under populated country areas. That would even up the voting strengths of the country areas to something like those of metropolitan districts and the L.C.L. would lose a number of country seats upon which it relies for its present majority. For what is the present position? The Labor Party has for years polled a majority

of overall votes in the State at State as well as Federal elections. But under our present rigged system the A.L.P. did not gain a majority of seats. The metropolitan area, with 63% of the population elects only 13 of the 39 members and some metropolitan seats contain 29,000 votes electing one member as compared with some country districts with only 6,000 voters electing one member. That is why the L.C.L. members in Parliament have for years voted against Labor decentralisation motions.

But what does the extraordinary L.C.L. argument which I mentioned amount to. It means by decentralisation not decentralisation of control, regardless of whether there are people there to exercise it. According to the L.C.L. argument if you get a large sparsely populated country area, you should give it a member of Parliament, even with only a handful of people to exercise the vote. This of course, is a complete denial of democracy - it means not people's rule, but area rule. You give the vote not to people but to acreage. To miles of empty spaces peopled by little other than saltbush. Moreover, the existing system is not fair even on its own premises. For the Labor party members represent not only more than half the electors of the State, but they also represent more than half the State in area.

And then the L.C.L. and its morning daily paper have the face to call this decentralisation. What sort of decentralisation is it which keeps the country areas underpopulated and underdeveloped for the sole purpose of keeping the present dictatorship in power? None at all, of course, but then logic and reason principle and justice have never been well looked on in the Leave the Country League.

Goodnight.